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"Ha! what's this?" They were burned; so they said: "These are chiefs because they brought this fire." It is this they remember, even to-day. . . .' And another informant explained: 'The fire means (*kukuti*) that a new chief has come, he brings fire, we throw away the old fire in the house.'

Having lighted their fires the young men cut bamboos and build temporary shelters for themselves, making one or more huts according to their numbers. It is forbidden for them to sleep in old huts, nor may they build on the site on which they lived as boys. Usually their first huts are on what was formerly pasture land, and later their fathers move aside to make room for the new generation. On the new site the two senior headmen of the new chief, together with a doctor, plant with magical ritual two branches of a *ficus* (known in Nyakyusa as *ilyuuky*) — a species which is important economically since the bark of saplings provides the traditional dress of Nyakyusa women. These trees, known as *ulupando* and *umpandapanda*, are planted where the future boundary will run between the two halves of the young chief's country, and the senior headman (who is leader of the senior half of the country) builds his house near where the *ulupando* has been planted. He and his colleague, together with the doctor, proceed, after planting the trees, to set up the hearth-stones of his hut. Again magic is performed. Nyakyusa informants were not agreed as to the symbolism of these trees, as they were about the symbolism of the new fire. The root *ulupanda* means to plant a crop, or to set up, or establish the hearth-stones of a house; it is used also for establishing, or treating, with medicines. Some informants interpreted the *ulupando* as the chief and *umpandapanda* as his wife, saying: 'We are planting the chief and his wife.' Others said that the two trees represented the two senior headmen of the country, another that they represented the chief's two senior wives. What is certain is that *ulupando* is regarded as more important than *umpandapanda* and that both are taboo. No one may cut the trees. If anyone breaks the taboo it is believed that lions and leopards (closely associated with chiefs) will roar at night, and treatment by a doctor will be necessary to still them. It is also widely believed that the strength of the chief is associated with the growth of the trees. 'If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is

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a ruler.' It is relevant to add that cuttings of this tree strike easily in the soil and climate of Nyakyusa country. When a chief dies he is buried beside his trees, and gradually a thicket—a sacred grove—forms round them.

The young men spend much time feasting and dancing. Formerly not only did they raid cattle for food from neighbouring chiefdoms, but they also took cattle, milk, and bananas from their fathers' villages. And they still do the latter, for they say: 'We are now the owners of the country.' The milk and bananas are often sent by the old chief, but 'if the chief is stingy, they teach him a lesson by going and *taking* bananas, saying: "We are important people."' Great emphasis is laid on this right of the young men to take food: one group, the mates of the first heir of a senior chief [illegible] 'We [illegible] grandfather, we are many men's cattle.'

After a month or two the members of each new village move off to build on a site of their own, and the wives of those who are married join them. Wives do not come to the first temporary shelters. The senior of the new villages remains on the site of the temporary shelters where fire was made, the ritual trees planted, and the hearth-stones of the senior headman established with magic. Gradually each member builds himself a permanent hut.

The old men move aside to make room for their sons. If land is short they may move on to the site on which a boys' village formerly was, or there may be other land available. Whatever the position, adequate land must be provided for the young men's villages. And, we were told, 'We old men are glad to move, we are glad our sons are so many and we leave the land to them.' Or again: 'The old men move because new fire has come; the young men have made themselves into new people, hence they cannot build on their old sites but on new ones. Perhaps the old men will succeed them, for they may build in the boys' village where their sons were, or if there is space they go elsewhere. But the old men rejoice greatly, for their sons have "come out".' Nevertheless there are sometimes disputes between villages of different generations regarding a particular site (*vide* Document, p. 188).

A few months after the 'coming out' each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. A young chief may be married already; but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*abake*

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tion is already as important beyond as within the village, and village control over the main cash crops has not been established, as it was over certain food crops. With increasing centralization the village headman, embodiment of the solidarity and relative autonomy of each village, is losing power to the chiefs and courts, on the one hand, and to the specialist agriculturalists, school teachers, elders, and ministers of religion on the other.

Friendships beyond the age-village are fostered by common experiences at a boarding school or a labour centre, and by common interests as members of a church or a coffee co-operative which does not necessarily include fellow villagers. And most dangerous of all, fellow villagers are not bound to one another in resistance to external dangers as they were formerly. Lion, leopard, and buffalo still exist in the district, but we heard of no recent case of a village combining for defence against dangerous (as distinct from destructive) game: if action were necessary a European sportsman was usually glad of the chance of a bag. With the cessation of cattle-raiding and inter-village warfare, the curtailment of the right of self-help, and the development of courts with power to enforce judgement in cases involving members of different chiefdoms, dependence on fellow villagers for protection from material dangers and the responsibility of a village for the actions of its members, virtually cease. A sense of dependence upon neighbours for mystical protection lingers, but as elementary education, belief in Christian dogma, and the solidarity of Christian congregations increase, this supposed dependence upon the *amasaga* or mystical power of neighbours also lessens. Many men who fear sorcery (including poisoning) do not fear witchcraft, and it is only against witches that neighbours are believed to protect one. Thus change in the form of beliefs is correlated with the development of more intense relationships beyond the village.

An age-village organization is probably dependent upon isolation in another fashion also: by their own account the Nyakyusa feeling that close association between successive generations is improper has been blunted by the example of Europeans and Swahili who do not share this feeling (*vide supra*, p. 69). The missionaries teach that avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is unnecessary, if not in itself sinful, and the implication is that only 'superstition' maintains the taboo (*vide*

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621 177 784 178 *supra*, p. 84). The Nyakyusa pattern of avoidance has undoubtedly influenced that of the small groups absorbed by them, but they in turn have been influenced by these groups, and by the example of Christians of neighbouring tribes. In Ilolo avoidance between father- and daughter-in-law is much less strict than in Selya. This was attributed partly to the influence of neighbouring small groups of Nyika and Penja, who had not the same tradition of strict avoidance as the Nyakyusa, and partly to the influence of the Christians, whose number was proportionately greater in Ilolo than in Selya. As Nyakyusa informants argued: the pagans see Christian women disregard avoidance taboos, and they see that nothing dreadful happens to them (as the result of their neglect), so the pagans, too, begin to think that avoidance is of no importance.

621 561 178 The relationship between the generations is also modified among the Nyakyusa, as among other African people, by the power of young men to earn money and so command wealth. As we have seen, sons are in a position to *invite* their fathers to drink beer in the father's own homestead. Once fathers and sons have begun to *nkwangala*, drinking beer together, and once the horror of a woman seeing her father-in-law has diminished, then there is much less insistence on the need to buttress separation of the generations by territorial segregation. When convenient, fathers and sons will continue to live apart, but if a building site and arable land near his age-mates is lacking a son may suggest that avoidance does not really matter after all, and his father (if a Christian or a sceptic) may agree to the son building near him.

621 561 178 Nyakyusa age-villages still flourish, but they are hardly likely to survive many decades with increasing pressure on land, the planting of coffee and other long-term crops, the development of trade and migration, and a diminishing isolation from the ideas and values of the outside world. Age is no longer the sole basis for village grouping in Rungwe district—common belief and common occupation now provide other grounds for building together. There are Christian villages, an administrative station, a military station, and trading centres such as Mwaya, the Lake port. Tukuyu (the administrative centre) has its police lines, quarters for hospital attendants, traders' quarters, and so on, while Masoko has soldiers' and traders' quarters. This account of age-villages may therefore have some significance as a docu-

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mourners sat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the bananas. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufumbo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imindu*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilinwanwa*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (*the fire*), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukugela imigela*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *ficus* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the home of the deceased is taboo (*muiko*), for hammering bark-cloth is a symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

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768 It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before
●[784] the ritual[1] is over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is
[833] finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the semen refuses to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*akalulu*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyitu, ifyitu, tunyomwike ilindu*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mindu* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akindile ubunyago*).' Then they pray in the bananas. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their
[831] legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibalaga* and with meat; the first is buried in the bananas, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibalaga* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibalaga* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

768 The *ilibalaga* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the
775 shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

[643] QUESTION: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

643 KASITILE: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has
768 intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the
833 man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one beats the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiant to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mindu.*' Then they pray and pray, and praise all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the semen comes.

775 The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the
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[1] [i.e. the farewell to the dead.--Analyst]

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764 177 Then they explained to me that formerly it was forbidden to scrape bananas at a death, you eat them with the ash on, for if you scrape you will scrape your body also, that is, you will scratch and scratch. But now that custom is finished. Three men were scraping away.

784 Mwaikambo said: 'In all rituals it is forbidden to scrape bananas —in the puberty and twin rituals also.'

184 784 KASITILE: It is forbidden to scrape bananas only at a death ritual, not at other rituals. If you scrape bananas you scrape your own body. It is the corpse. We have died, we are the corpse. . . .

604 781 764 The mother's brother (*umwipwa*) hands bananas and meat over his shoulder to the children who are treated, then he goes off home and they go home without looking back at one another. If they do look back at one another the child will grow feeble and go mad. If the mother's brother does not come to cut the banana grove and do this, if the child sees others eating that banana it becomes feeble and goes mad. The banana and the meat are the filth which madmen take hold of, they are filth. Yes, it is like the banana which they eat at the pumpkin-seeds ritual.

QUESTION: Why the mother's brother?

KASITILE: Who should give it to them? Their kinsman (*unkamu*) should give it to them, he who looks after everything for them.

ii. *Mwandisi's interpretation.*[1]

764 QUESTION: What do you do in the death ritual, what does it mean?

MWANDISI: When a child has died I do not approach the women, my wives, until we have finished the ritual. On the night of the day we drink the beer then we come together. It is a ritual! Yes, the coming together of man and woman is a ritual (*bo bunyago*). If we come together before the beer then we overstep our child, Lubabelo, he will be impotent and not beget children. No, his children are not relatives (*bo bandu*) they are my comrades (*bobinangu*) but if Lubabelo forestalls (*ukukinda*) the ritual with his wife then he oversteps (*ukukinda*) his children. And when we have finished the ritual Lubabelo begins[2] and goes first to his wife. We follow him at our home. If we begin we would overstep him, it is taboo (*muviko*). At the ritual of pumpkin-seeds, we drive away the shade, we say: 'Do not rise from the dead and come to us, go to the land of the shades, that we may bear and beget another child, you prevent us doing so!'

[833]

[1] His son Lubabelo, who was with us during the earlier part of the conversation, left so that we could speak freely. There was no difficulty about Mwandisi's wife being present.

[2] Mwandisi was referring to a ritual performed on the death of his son Lubalelo's child.

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764 heir. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fya bufwele*), of lamentation (*kyo kesa*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ilingolongofwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

768 764 [787] At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says:' So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akema nnyumba*)?

MWANDISI: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ikunyagula*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *batwemile* and *Kyala emile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*akalulu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ours, ours!'?

[784 ●784] MWANDISI: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo. Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-lands.

764 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of chiefs (*ubusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWANDISI: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*nsito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of chiefs two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*) of the mats. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for sexual intercourse.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhœa. The man and his wives are burning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of sausages of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

[833 195] [753]

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

[1] No other informant mentioned this in the MuNgonde death ritual.

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(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijulu*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

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775 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

885 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

> We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

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585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingotolo* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

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●784 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approaching her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibuko* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

> A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

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blood of another lineage mingles with hers, but it has not reached her mother because they have not met. To drink water together from one calabash is to meet. Then the mother has diarrhœa because her body is not accustomed to the blood of another lineage. To have diarrhœa is to go bad, to expel (*ukusosya*) the filth. The *ilibuko* of the fowl is the body of the groom which mingles with the body of the girl's parents that they may be one blood with him.

Thus, not only husband and wife, but also parents and son-in-law become one flesh.

As in Selya, a direct connection is made between the parents receiving a bull for the bride's virginity, and her bearing a child to her husband. Mwasalemba explained: 'Kyala together with the shades have made the girl grow up. If the girl runs off with her husband and I, the father, have not received cattle, then the earth is angry, the shades say: "We shall see if she will flourish there." Then the girl does not conceive, and the diviner says: "The shades are angry." The groom's people bring cattle, then I, the father, pray for my child and she conceives, her belly swells.'

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her husband may give her *ikipiki* to rub on her hands and on a stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them *ikipiki* that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time.'

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukukilanya*, overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. It she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care.

In its metaphorical sense *ukukilyana* is used for a 'heavy' person coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse.

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ikigune*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots.

Mwaihojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

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and that cures him. So, when a man comes to a smith's forge for the first time, he always takes a piece of charcoal from the fire and spits on it and throws it into the fire. This means: 'I have come to your forge, smith, may this fire not come on my body.'

And sometimes the smith's iron does not glow and sparkle well. Then he is angry, saying: 'Heavy ones are present. Some of you have pregnant wives, you are spoiling my fire.' We all pick up pieces of charcoal and spit on them and throw them into the fire again. Then the fire blazes up well and the iron glows and sparks.

Mwambuputa, the village headman, confirmed this:

When my wife is pregnant I fear the smithy. I spit on a piece of charcoal. Until she gives birth I fear, but when we just play together on the mat, and she has not yet conceived, I do not fear. . . . Only when it is seen that the 'iron' is there do I fear.

QUESTION: The iron?

MWAMBUPUTA: It's the blood of the man. The man is the smith. He forges iron there with the woman. The woman is the bellows. The smithing flourishes because of the sweat. Sometimes a woman conceives if I have lain with her two or three times—if Kyala gives us a child—but some delay, and I sleep with them a whole month.

QUESTION: The woman is a bellows?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, because when she is having intercourse she gasps: 'He, he, he!'

QUESTION: And the man?

MWAMBUPUTA: Yes, but where do we find the fire? In the body of the woman! It's a great fire. Hence we say the bellows is the woman. It's smithing. Women are the anvil. Is there not fire in their bodies? Therefore I hammer there.

The primary taboo is on the pregnant woman approaching the smithy lest she injure it, but it is also thought that, like grain and cattle, it may be treated with strong medicines which will cause her to miscarry if she breaks the taboo. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'She who has a miscarriage is she who is proud (*namatingo*).'

The conception that like things are antagonistic, and that the sexual activities of different couples must not be mixed, is clearly shown in the taboos relating to fire and the calabash cup used for water. An elderly councillor of Ngonde, himself a Christian, explained it:

It is taboo for married people to blow up the fire in someone else's house, or to drink from the calabash cup; if they do they will bring a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house.... Pagans used to fear to let those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*myoto*).... But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umwana gwa busungu*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 'To-day there is no ritual, we have come to express sympathy (*ukuti ndaga*).'[1]

845 The two grown sons of Mwakobela were building a little hut of
342 saplings and had finished the main structure, but had not yet thatched it. 'She will sleep there to-night. They will put leaves on top.' Kikuku brought a message from Mwaipopo, to whom they had previously sent to tell him of the twin birth: 'If the hut is not finished she may sleep in the house, I agree to that. But Mwakobela said:

845 No, the hut is finished, she can sleep there. [To me]: To-night she will just sleep there, then the doctor will come [it is Mwaipopo's business to find the doctor] and will induct her (*ukummwingisya*), and then we shall lay the litter. The woman and her mother sleep there for a month with the twins—no others—the mother alone keeps her company (*ikumpanja*); then the doctor will come again to bring her out (*ukunsosya*). The ritual is in two parts, the induction and the bringing out.

They tie up the cord of the first twin to be born with a shred of plantain bark, and of the second with a shred of sweet banana bark, the plantain bark is a sign of seniority.

The woman may not cook while she is in the hut—it's taboo. But the other wives cook food for her and bring it to prevent her dying of hunger. Also her friends of the village will come with food and firewood to greet her. The pot in which food is cooked for the parents of twins must not be covered when it is on the fire, and if plantains are cooked only the middle bunches on the stem are used, not the ends; those at the ends are thrown away. When they are eating the wife may not begin until the husband has received his and put some in his mouth, then she too may eat.

845 It is wholly taboo for the mother of twins to call for anything she
●784 wants. She knocks with a stick to summon the one who brings her food. . . . If her husband wants anything he calls to his wives, it is not taboo, but he does not shout loudly, he must be careful not to make too great a noise, for if he shouts his children's hearts are startled and, it is said, they will die.

Traditionally, when the mother had to leave the hut to relieve herself, she walked backwards and hid her face with a piece of mat, to prevent herself from looking at the front of anyone. She avoided cows at pasture, and if she caught sight of anyone in the distance she waved a hand to warn them to let her pass.

May 13

845 Mwaiswelo III (Mwakobela's brother) came to fetch us at ten-

[1] This phrase can imply either condolence or congratulation.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

CHAPTER VII

Things Forbidden

WHEN the Konde wish to say that a certain thing is prohibited, they call it *mwiko*, a word which includes all that is more popularly known as *tabu*, prohibitions connected with religion, good manners, medicines; in short there is a code of regulations which might well be called the laws of life, were it not that they are in all cases prohibitions, and never injunctions directing one what to do. What is *mwiko* is what is forbidden, and it is forbidden because it is disgraceful, wicked, improper, inconvenient. No decent person ever breaks these laws intentionally, but the punishment for unwitting breach is the same as for the most wicked intention; it is in most cases automatic, falling indifferently upon the well- and the ill-intentioned. But while this is so, the punishment is by no means inevitable; medicines, ceremonies, payments, can avert most of them, leaving little except the curse of a father, and one or two other things, against which there is no protection.

The native has no explanation of these prohibitions, except that they were handed down from the fathers. They are all the more valid for that; buried deep in the past, and coming upon each individual with all

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

•784 the authority and mystery of the ages, he accepts them unquestioningly; nor would his faith be at all weakened if he knew that in some cases punishment had failed to follow transgression. He would conclude that protection had in some acknowledged way been found, but he had not happened to hear of it. To break a *tabu* in order to see what would happen is an act of folly so extreme that only a few men can afford to risk it.

Anything like a complete account of the endless prohibitions which hedge the life of the Konde is not attempted here. He meets them when he first opens his eyes upon the world, and parts from them only when he goes to the land of spirits, where, no doubt, another set of laws awaits him. While he lives he has to be on the watch for prohibitions referring to God and the spirits; to persons, acts, words, places, animals, and in some degree to time itself.

Thus it is *mwiko* to use the name of God unnecessarily in taking an oath; nor may the name of the chief be used with too much freedom, *tata*, father, being his more common appellation. A wife may never speak of her father-in-law by name, nor a husband of his mother-in-law. Some parts of the body are *mwiko*, and are not named. Animals, again, especially dangerous animals, are more dangerous if their names are used, for the name calls the owner to the place where it is heard. A lion or leopard known to be prowling about at night is referred to as *tata*, father; and if the animal is being hunted, one coming in later to join in the hunt must not ask, "Where is

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

784 it?" even although he avoids the name. If a woman about to go for water or firewood hears anyone use the word for lion, she will not go. An elephant in the garden is referred to, very strangely, as *ikisa*, the world; a crocodile is *ikya mmisi*, the thing in the water; and a snake is referred to as "the thing from the grass." The name of a dead person is not used by relatives.

Again, it is *mwiko* to see certain persons. Chungu, in the past, must not be seen by young people, though I have been unable to learn that anything very dreadful happened to them if they did. On the other hand, children are still kept away from great doctors, whose glance has power to kill them; nor may anyone watch a doctor making up his medicines.

784 Growing crops and food being cooked must not be approached by unclean persons, for the uncleanness
783 would pass over and affect the food or the crops; as it would affect other persons if they came near the unclean. Uncleanness is transmissible, and the full ceremonial of the original uncleanness must be gone through by the one to whom it has been transmitted, lest it should desecrate the whole community with its living *tabu*.

784 Prohibited places are numerous, chief among them being graves, which are *mwiko* to all except the families to which they belong. It is forbidden to work when a dead person is being mourned for, but I cannot learn that a breach of this rule would imply anything except disrespect to the dead.

If we try to classify the prohibitions we shall find

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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784 that the classes tend to shade into each other, leaving no clear line of demarcation between one class and another; but there are some that are quite definitely religious, and with these we may begin.

It is forbidden to mock at the lame, the deaf, the blind, the dumb, or persons otherwise unfortunate. The wrath of God is aroused, and the offender will suffer the disability he laughs at in others. "Who mocks an orphan," says an old proverb; "let him beware; God is watching him." To insult one's father is a crime so great that nothing can avert the curse which follows, and follows automatically. The prohibition against the use of names, too, has in some cases certainly, in others probably, a religious sanction. It is *mwiko* for anyone but the family representative to pray to the spirits; though, in a case known to me, where a Christian prayed in an assembly of chiefs and others gathered for the purpose, and the rain asked for duly came, the older people acknowledged that the event justified the breach of custom.

764 Omission of the customary funeral rites is disgraceful, and the dead man will not fail to avenge himself upon the offender. A case came to my knowledge quite recently where a son refused to perform the usual ceremonies for his just-departed father, and the life of his own son was barely saved, so every one believed, by a timely surrender. It is an interesting fact that no opprobrium attaches to a Christian who omits these rites, nor does any visitation follow from the spirit land, while upon a heathen the punishment

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
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falls automatically. If the family "priest" becomes 764
a Christian, and therefore ceases to pray to the spirits, no one will take up his religious duties until he has been publicly appointed by the family to do so.

To offer a blemished animal in sacrifice, to eat the 734
blood of a sacrificed animal, to eat animals that do not divide the hoof, are all forbidden; though the double qualification, to divide the hoof and chew the cud, is not insisted upon. This has direct religious sanction, but whether the prohibition against eating beasts of prey is so founded, I do not know. The Bandali even now will eat lion's flesh, and at Karonga long ago, though not now, the crocodile was eaten.

Night belongs to the spirits, and certain things must not be done then. If a woman sweeps out the house at night, her husband will indignantly ask her why she is driving off his ancestors! The spirits cut their hair at night, therefore living men must not. If bark-cloth is beaten out at night, the cattle will die; and if food is pounded or firewood cut up, leopards will come, and kill cattle, and perhaps people. It is *mwiko* to clap the hands at night (except openly in the dance), for the spirits do so, and imitation might be regarded by them as mockery, not flattery. A fire should not be kindled at night, nor should one lie on his back if lightning is playing around, for the lightning gets at one more easily in that position. To sit in the doorway at night is to usurp the place of the spirits when ceremonies are being performed.

Animals in which the spirits dwell, frogs, lizards,

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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snakes, lions, crocodiles, must not be carelessly killed. Kill a frog, and you will become a leper; the spirit that lived in the frog will see to that. Not that a spirit dwells in every frog; but why take unnecessary risks! As for the lizard, what harm has it ever done to anyone? The stronger and more dangerous animals can take care of themselves; but again, not every one of these is inhabited by a spirit; one that kills people may be safely killed. The two-headed snake, *Ndamirakwa*, may be the temporary dwelling of God Himself, and must not be killed. The owl is perhaps in a different category: it is a favourite dwelling of sorcerers; and some insist on killing it for that very reason, while others say that to kill it is murder.

Hair must not be swept up, but picked up, and all foreign matter separated; else death may follow, either by witchcraft, or by the action of the spirits. It must not be left lying about, lest goats should eat it; in which case the late owner will assuredly become bald! The hair on the chest again, must not be cut, for one's children will die. All this no doubt had a religious sanction in the past; but no Konde will admit that it is any more than a custom handed down, and for that reason to be carefully observed.

The jealousy of the spirits demands that a child dying during the life of its paternal-grandfather, be buried at the house of the latter, not at its own father's; that the child of a second wife be buried at the house of the principal wife; and that a man who would die well, should die at the house of his

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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first wife, for it is there only that the spirits meet him; and if he becomes ill anywhere else, he has himself removed as soon as possible to the place where it is proper for him to die, if die he must.

A man who has been falsely reported dead in a far land, must not, on his return home, enter the village without ceremony. Letters sent on ahead to assure his relatives that he is alive, are not enough; his father comes out to meet him; but he takes care not to see his son until assurance has been given that he is a true man, not a spirit; whereupon the father throws some food over his son's head, and both enter the village in peace.

It is *mwiko* to kill a python unless one is sure that it is dangerous. If it is found in the feeding ground, and the cows that day give a specially good milking, then it has been herding the cattle, and is not to be sought for afterwards with hostile intent. But the boys who saw it must go to the doctor to get medicine. Further, God Himself may be in it, or the spirit of a dead chief, and therefore it must be watched for assurance of its friendliness. If it enters a house a fowl is thrown to it, with which, if it makes off, all is well.

Very interesting are some of the prohibitions connected with the white man; and it is obvious that these are of recent growth, so that we actually see *tabus* in the making. It is *mwiko* to go into a white man's house, for the pictures on his walls are the spirits of his ancestors, who are specially dangerous at night, when they may launch an unseen spear at

•784 177 the unlucky wight who has had the temerity to enter so dangerous a place. Further, a man dying of that invisible spear-wound will almost certainly have his portion with the spirits of white men, than which there is no more undesirable fate. Did he not have enough of the white men here on earth? This fear of the white man is passing; but there are still old men and women who will not approach him, for they insist that he is God, and it is *muiko* to see God. An old man died recently at Karonga, who had always refused to see a white man, lest the sight should smite him down. One of the teachers at the Mission at Ipyana told me that his own mother will not go near him when he has on a white garment, for that, she knows, is the sign that he is going to speak to God, and even a native is dangerous at such a time, for the power of God may break through to destruction. There is a curious belief still lingering among old people, that Europeans are forbidden to sleep in houses, but must come out at night, and sleep in pools, their native element being water; for they are water spirits in origin, a belief no doubt due to the widespread story that we came from the sea itself, rather than from some place beyond it. White people are supposed to hold it *muiko* to weep for the dead; and indeed why should they, seeing their dead arise at once and appear on the walls?

784 Some great chiefs must not tell if they have been wounded in battle. These remarkable men have power to remove a wound from a fatal to a non-fatal spot, and so recover. When Mwakalinga, in a fight

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with the Germans, was struck in the forehead by a bullet, he immediately removed the wound to his leg, where it was harmless. His *amafumu* (subordinate chiefs), however, sternly ordered him to replace it; for he had been toying with Christianity, to the disgust of his subordinates, who, seeing a chance to get rid of him, eagerly seized it, and Mwakalinga passed to his fathers. Mwatongo at Karonga has the same power, and there may be others.

War is attended with so many religious ceremonies that the *taboo* connected with it are best taken under this head. Cowardice in battle is *mwiko*, and the coward gets no share of the spoils. There is a beer feast as part of the preparation for war; but drunkenness before a battle is strictly forbidden. At the approach of war, husbands and wives must not live together, and he who is guilty of illegal intercourse will be killed at the first spear throw, before he has had time to throw his own spear; while a chief who is given to such acts will be defeated, and his men slain.

Prohibitions due to fear of infection are very numerous. One must not pass over the outstretched legs of another, for the offender will be "caught" by any disease from which the offended may be suffering; but a slight nip in the leg of the other by the offender wards off evil consequences. It is *mwiko* to throw a spear at a hyena, for the animal may escape with a wound, and barrenness will result for the offender, unless he goes at once to get counteracting medicines. If your father comes to visit you, you

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784 753 must not give him your own mat to sit on; he sits on a leaf, which is thrown away when he leaves you; otherwise your wives will become thin, and will have no children. It is *muiko* for an aunt to pat a nephew or niece on the buttocks, lest any disease she has may pass over to them. A man in an epileptic fit must not be roused; he who rouses him will himself become epileptic!

784 The saliva is sacred, and is often used in religious ceremonies; but to spit upon a man is *muiko*, and may bring itch and scab if payment is not made. The kidneys of an animal may be eaten only if given to you by a chief, or handed on the point of a spear; death of your children is the penalty of neglect of this precaution. Disease clings to the drug that is used to cure it; what is left must be thrown away where no one passes, lest a chance passer-by touching it with his foot be smitten by the disease. For possibly similar reasons, the family of a murdered man must not have friendly relations with the family of the murderer until the necessary ceremonies have been attended to: the spear that killed their friend may kill them too; that is to say, they may be smitten with a disease which reasonable men will trace to their folly in being friendly with hostile persons. The leaves upon which a man sat while his case was being tried have mysterious powers in them; a sorcerer may make deadly medicine out of them: therefore it is *muiko* not to throw them carefully away.

The blood of a lion killed in the hunt must not be

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allowed to escape; it has *ifingira*, the most powerful of all drugs, and is divided between the chief and the great doctors, who alone may cut up a lion's carcase. Another very powerful drug is *ilibobwe*, which, if cast into a doctor's house, destroys the virtue of all his medicines; and if carried through a garden will wither up all crops; it is therefore *mwiko* to possess it unless one is a doctor.

The code of manners includes prohibitions against speaking with the mouth full in the presence of elders; the elders will curse the offender with dire results; against spitting, for sorcerers only are great enough to dare, and one may be accused of sorcery. If a great man is passing, one must sit right down on the ground to salute him; to sit on a chair or any kind of seat is grossly bad manners, and is *mwiko*; it is followed by the unspoken but unfailing curse. Nakedness, even among the unclothed Konde, is a serious offence; at the least a small apron of leaves must be worn, for sorcerers go naked at night, and a charge may lie against anyone found unclad. If a stranger, notwithstanding the prohibition against it, asks for food, it must not be refused: how do you know that he is not a friend of Kabeta, who will send lions to punish you for churlishness! A woman must not eat while the males of her family are eating; if she does, her husband will talk to her presently. When on a journey, the young men must go first to face the dangers of the road; it is *mwiko* for the elders or chiefs to be in front. If two companies meet, they must not mix; each keeps its own side of

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576 the road, and all spears must be lowered from the "ready" position, as must axes or other weapons. It is *mwiko* to attend to one's personal comfort in a public place.

843 The prohibitions connected with women are very
784 numerous, and only a selection is given. A pregnant woman may not go near food in any condition, growing, being threshed, or being cooked; nor may she go near beer that is being prepared. If she goes out of the house, she must not turn back in the doorway; the ancestors are there; she must go right out, and if she needs to go in again, she must do it from a pace or so from the door. The penalty is the death of the child she is carrying. An interesting prohibition is that against going behind anyone, and it applies specially though not exclusively to women. The incised medicine of the person behind whom she passes loses its virtue; but the evil may be averted by the person turning round to face her. A woman must not sweep rubbish out of the house; she must lift it out; to sweep it out is to scatter her husband's wealth.

595 The younger wife must not begin sowing or planting until the elder has begun; she must not sleep at night nearer the fire than the elder; she must carry loads for the elder wife, and be generally in a subordinate position. There is no reluctance on the part of the first wife to see her husband taking others; the more he has the greater is her position. A singular prohibition is that which forbids a man to take his widowed mother home to care for her; he must care

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for her where she is, or at any rate at a distance from his own house. 595

Twins are among the greatest of misfortunes; and along with twins are counted children born feet first. This subject is dealt with separately, and it needs only to be noted that parents are segregated, must not speak even to each other except in whispers, must not drink milk, lest the cow should dry up, or give only water. The mother must not pass behind anyone without asking for permission, which is given by clapping hands; nor may she pass her own father without a ceremony in which she throws dust over his head. This goes on until another child is born, or until about five years have elapsed. 845 784

It is *mwiko* for a dog to drink the milk of a cow that has recently calved; the cow will dry up. The same result will follow if strangers go into the house while cows are being milked. It is forbidden to common people to eat new season's food until chiefs and village headmen and twins have eaten first; and even they eat only when the first fruits have been mixed with medicine by the doctor. The first fish of the season must not be taken to the village. It is eaten at the river by the boys. It belongs to the spirits. To make a sucking noise with the lips is *mwiko*, being a token of impudence; it may also lead to accusation of witchcraft. Never steal from a blacksmith; the scraps of iron you steal will produce a noise in your throat like the noise of his bellows, and presently you will die. 784

For a man to see his daughter-in-law, no matter 606

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Nothing was left to chance. The spirits having been placated, the natural skill of the hunters must be reinforced by medicines. Indeed it is not improbable that the native would say that the whole of his skill and success is due to medicines and ceremonies. The warrior goes out to battle armed and protected by prayers, drugs, and a good conscience; equally for the hunter good morals, good medicines, are as important as reliable weapons and a steady nerve. *Unkota wa nyango*, to ensure a good spear-throw, or a straight aim with the ancient rifle which some hunters carried, was rubbed into flesh cuts in the hands; and *burungo*, to make sure that the animal died quickly and without a long chase, was incised into the arms; but more frequently, and more effectively for this purpose, *bulembe* was attached to the spear. This latter is a deadly poison, happily, perhaps, known only to a very few, for a single scratch is said to be fatal. It is said that the Germans tried unsuccessfully to secure the secret of its manufacture. The poison is attached, in a leaf, to the blade of the spear, and the thrust into the flesh of the animal releases it, so that it enters the blood, and causes a speedy death.

224 789

[278]

Women must not touch or go near hunting weapons, which are kept in the roof of the house. The spears must not be placed near the fire, lest the game, sniffing in the breeze the smell of smoke, deduce the presence of mankind, and make off. The hunters must eat only freshly cooked food, for cold food destroys, as it does also for chiefs, the virtue of their medicines. Fatal results are sure to follow contact

224 784

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224 784 with their wives before setting out; and a wife who sins in her husband's absence, will cause his death on the hunting ground. The smell of clothes, like the smell of fire, would drive the game away, and therefore leaves only are worn while actually on the chase. Hunters thus fully equipped are called *abarumba*, the rank and file being mere *abafwimi* (drivers). The hunt might last for four to eight weeks, and as the men did not return to their homes until it was over, huts were built in which they slept. The boy who did the cooking was not allowed to hunt, for his close contact with the fire would be fatal to success.

224 Thus protected, the hunters went fearlessly to their work. In ordinary hunting there is no danger to speak of, though wounded animals sometimes turn furiously upon their hunters. But who can tell what sudden dangers the bush will spring upon one? I have passed within sound of the snoring of a gorged lion, and being unarmed, I could only pass on; I have been charged by enraged elephant and buffalo, and only barely escaped; and not once or twice lions have crossed the path not far from where I was. Such dangers the native hunters faced, armed only with spears or old breech-loading rifles, no doubt further strengthened by the consciousness of the numerous medicines by which they were protected. These, however, are incidental dangers: the actual hunting involved dangers knowingly and unflinchingly faced. I have myself been present when a native speared a wounded buffalo at a distance of a yard or two, dancing, waving his spear, and singing a song of

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were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande.

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1]

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest.

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well."

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty

[1] *Vide infra* section 3 (a).

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cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he had always to be carried.

And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

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769 643 were not ill, they were not troubled as we are. For later in the evening, while the Lwembe was still alive, the commoner priests removed his nails and hair; they came near and plucked them off. He shouted: 'Who is snatching at me?' They replied: 'No one', and then they smothered him with cloth in the nostrils and in the anus, and he went away [i.e. he died]. . . . They did it only when he had initiated it himself by saying: 'I have eaten food in the land of the shades'; they [775] did not begin it themselves. . . . They collected the relics in a little bamboo flask, and a priest treated them so that Lwembe might not go away with the food to the land of the shades, that the fertility of the soil (*ilifugo*), this *ifingila*, might always remain above.

[778] These relics, the hair and the nails, were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops.

643 While the Lwembe lived he was secluded—ordinary men did not see him—and he was subject to numerous taboos. For example, ● [784] he might not tread in water lest the country should be flooded; he never bathed in a stream (as Nyakyusa men do daily) and was carried across any river when travelling; he must not sit on a green banana leaf lest the bananas in the country should fail, but was always provided with a skin to sit upon, and he ate only the middle portion of a banana throwing away the ends for 'if he finished the whole of a banana he would create hunger in the country'. No one might grasp his hand, or drink out of the same calabash as he, save the priests of his own age; if he drank from a calabash when travelling he took it with him, for 'if he left it behind he left hunger in that place'.

The selection of the Lwembe was in the hands of the hereditary priests of Lubaga and the hereditary Kinga priests, who come from BuKinga to sacrifice at Lubaga. The man they choose must be of good character—at the time we were in BuNyakyusa the only willing candidate was rejected because 'he is a bad man, a thief, they refuse to have a thief as priest'—he must exhibit in his own home the power of fertility. 'They don't catch just anyone, but [842] one with children, and cattle, and fertility of the fields in his own homestead. If the man taken as chief is not fertile and rich there will be many sterile people in the homesteads, and much disease and hunger.'

When the priests had decided upon the man of their choice, they seized him and set him upon a sacred skin and a pad of leaves; and it was believed that once he had been set thereon he [761] would die if he refused office; tales were told of a younger brother

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(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died.

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief.

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.'

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all

[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

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643 784 [117] round him and sit at home in the middle in the sun. . . . All the old chiefs inspired fear (*bapala*). It used to be taboo to walk near the house of a chief and approach him unless taken by a village headman . . . nowadays men walk about and enter his home and even steal his food.'[1] The power came partly from his position as the living Lwembe, and partly from the medicines with which he was treated, especially the terrible *ifingila*.

643 [554] The 'divine king' who came as a conqueror bringing iron is also associated with victory in battle. Still today a brave fighter is saluted as 'Lwembe', and an iron spear is one of the emblems of chieftainship.

643 793 782 The Lwembe was himself a priest—he is often referred to as *unyago*—but he was assisted by commoners. There is a hereditary keeper of the grove of Lubaga named Kissoule who is the descendant of that Kissoule the commoner who fled from BuKinga with Lwembe. It is he who conducts the sacrifices, who daubs the participants with medicines before they enter, and who protects the groves. 'If by mistake the grove was a little burnt then the people here paid a beast to Kissoule, it was his to eat as he liked.' Others of the priests say that Lwembe found their ancestors at Lubaga; they are 'owners of the soil' there, and one of them, Mwasesi, could give us the names of six generations of ancestors who had been priests of Lubaga before him. But the bulk of the commoner priests are not hereditary at all, they are surviving village headmen (or their heirs) of the most recently dead Lwembe.

The success of the sacrifices at Lubaga was held to depend upon the proper co-operation of chiefs and priests: first, on the Lwembe himself (the shortage of food among the Kinga, and of milk among the Nyakyusa, while we were there, was attributed by Kasitile to the fact that there was no living Lwembe); secondly on the commoner priests of Lubaga; thirdly on the commoner Kinga priests; fourthly on Kasitile (86) and certain other priests of Selya; and fifthly on the chiefs of the Nyakyusa and the Kinga who provided the offerings. 'Can a priest celebrate alone?' said Kasitile. 'No, the ritual depends on the chiefs.' The celebrations thus linked together chiefs and people, as well as Kinga and Nyakyusa, and numerous different Nyakyusa chiefdoms. The hereditary Kinga priests live in the country of the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa and

[1] This is inconsistent with Kasitile's statement quoted above. The general opinion was that chiefs were more powerful than formerly, but the living Lwembe less so.

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'Lwembe listens to him'. 'If Kinga messengers went [to Lubaga] without going through Mwakalukwa's country there would be much hunger. . . . Once Mwemusi and Kyelela [Kinga chiefs] conspired together and sent off men with hoes to Lubaga, without reference to Mwakalukwa. They carried ten hoes. But when they got back disease killed many in the country, and they paid Mwakalukwa and did not do it again.'

It is true that an independent Nyakyusa chief *can* send an offering to Lubaga on his own; it is received by the priests of Lubaga and sacrificed in the grove, and such a sacrifice is held to be in some measure efficient, but drought or sickness in the country as a whole is often attributed to one or other of the participating groups failing to play their part. Moreover, such a failure is thought to be dangerous to the chief or priest who neglects his duties, as we shall see in the case of Kasitile.

The priests of Lubaga ministered to the Lwembe but they had also the right and duty of admonishing him if he did wrong, just as village headmen have the right and duty of admonishing their chief. If the Lwembe broke a taboo 'then Kissoule and the other priests would be very angry and reproach him for bathing and making hunger, and he would pay them a bull in recompense.' Even the 'divine king' was subject to the rule of law. All through the political organization and ritual patterns of the Nyakyusa there is this balance and reciprocity between chiefs and commoners and it is here that the Nyakyusa system differs radically from that described by Professor Frankfort for ancient Egypt.[1] The heroes had brought the gift of chieftainship to the Nyakyusa but it had not ousted another, perhaps older, tradition of democratic leadership; instead, the two were welded in a partnership which, to the Nyakyusa, is so much part of the necessary order of the universe that they speak of commoner priests and headmen as 'wives' of the chiefs. The Kissoule in office is 'the wife' of the Lwembe.

In the grove at Lubaga sacrifices of black cattle and sheep and libations of millet beer were offered by the Nyakyusa, while the Kinga brought hoes, bamboo beer, salt, the sacred drum *ngoma*, and *ifika*, that is, marvels whose nature, Kasitile averred, he did not know himself. The shrine of Lubaga, and the actors and actions connected with it, are miraculous and terrible, terrible even to the actors themselves who tremble when they enter the grove, and

[1] H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), pp. 51-6.

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to the women here, but to their husbands.' So Kitega took back to the tree the sweet banana leaf, containing the portion for the women. 782 796

Meanwhile strips of meat had been roasted and were eaten with roast bananas, while the milk was finished up by the Nyakyusa present. All the millet beer had been poured out, but the bamboo beer that remained was finished, part drunk, part blown from the mouth by the two Kinga boys, grandsons of the priests. Then the rest of the meat was divided up, one back leg being given to the Kinga. But they took the head (their traditional right) as well, without being given it. There was some considerable protest at this: 'Do you take twice?' they were asked. And more protest still when they began to go away with it. Nsyanigwa (the Kinga priest) replied furiously. 'Let it go, let them take it' was the final comment of the local people, but both parties were angry. Two legs went to the chiefs, one to the Nyakyusa commoners, and the breast to Mwanjala.

After the meat had been safely disposed of Nsyanigwa gave his parting instructions: 'You sirs (*batwa*), thank you, thank you. We remember that it was Mwakalukwa (the Kinga chief) who said "Pray for us"! Thank you! We thank you! Now you must build your chief, Mwanjala (78), a little hut in which to sleep with the breast of beef so that the lord (*kyala*)[1] may eat, and in the morning if *kyala* has eaten let him go to his home. This calf I brought, I Nsyanigwa, from BuKinga. Let the knife I brought remain with it too.' Then Nsyanigwa went off and his advice was discussed. Mwanjala laughed and said: 'I have no house to sleep in . . . shall I sleep by myself? Outside?' Several suggested that it was the custom for some other man to accompany him. No one knew who should do so, but someone suggested Kissoule. In fact Mwanjala went home with the breast of beef and did not remain overnight in the grove. But he and the priests held apart from their wives and children. Mwamalunguka (the priest) explained: 'We avoid sleeping with our wives for three nights. It is taboo to go to them. We say, "Let us w[illegible] and anoint ourselves and be alone until that lord (*kyala*) has gone out of our bodies, since we were in the ritual". We bathe tomorrow and the next day and anoint ourselves, but avoid our wives for three nights. Also our children are anointed on the forehead with medicine—the young [784] [783]

[1] The name *kyala* had not been used in the invocation, and the only references to him in this ritual were the two just quoted.

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782 796 [783] children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both have our children anointed now.'

This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the [643] [793] [177] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him. The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *isgombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
● [784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

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die. . . . People feared very much because the Lwembe had medicines for smearing on his body, which could cause rain, sickness, food, ulcers, anything.

And they feared lest they might get ulcers if they killed one of Lwembe's men 'on the road'—i.e. a traveller. In short, Lwembe's mystical power afforded the first feeble beginnings of a 'king's peace' in a land of warring chiefdoms, where strangers were fair game.

(c) Mbande

Mbande is a hill on the plain of north Nyasaland with a commanding view of the surrounding country and well suited to defence. The west side is precipitous and below the scarp edge there used to be a marsh; to the north the hill is protected by a wide reach of the Lukulu river. It is a sacred place and for many generations was the home of the 'divine king', the Kyungu. Like the Lwembe he was the living representative of a hero, and was selected by a group of hereditary nobles from one of two related lineages, the office alternating (if suitable candidates were available) between the two. They sought a big man,[1] one who had begotten children and whose sons were already married, not a young man for, the nobles said, 'young men always want war, and destroy the country'. He must be a man of wisdom (*gwe mutale*) and generous in feeding his people.

The Kyungu's life was governed by taboos even more rigorous than those surrounding the Lwembe. He must not fall ill, or suffer a wound, or even scratch himself and bleed a little, for his ill health, or his blood falling on the earth would bring sickness to the whole country. 'Men feared when Kyungu's blood fell on the ground, they said, "It is his life".' 'If he had a headache his wives (if they loved him) told him not to mention it, they hid his illness; but if the nobles entered and found him ill they dug the grave and put him in it, saying, "He is the ruler (*nene*), it's taboo for him to be ill". Then he thought: "Perhaps it is so" (with a gesture of resignation).'

Great precautions were taken to preserve his health. He lived in a separate house with his powerful medicines. His food was prepared by boys below the age of puberty lest a menstruating woman, or a youth who had lain with a woman, should touch it and so bring sickness upon him; and his numerous wives were

[1] *Ukumbala mwene*. In implies both big physically and important.

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often leake out, but in theory the young men must not know, and those seized always put up a show of resistance before being bundled into the hut of the senior heir's mother. Once there, no man dare flee her, like a Lwembe fleeing from the mud, he should die. The two heirs are seized also and carried into the hut with their headmen. A litter is spread for them, and they remain there in complete seclusion, required to 'talk softly' and avoid quarrelling, guarded by the 'doctor of the coming out' and forbidden to wash except that each of the chiefs and his senior village headman washes with medicines in the doorway of the hut. Each chief also lies down with a commoner and is covered with a black cloth which, according to Mwandisi (the old blind chief 107) is a symbol of clouds and therefore of plenty. 'It means, may it be heavy—cloudy—above, may food be plentiful; may both heirs bring fruitfulness.' The commoner who lies with the chief is 'one body with him', 'his wife', and continues through life to share with him certain medicines. Some said that the senior village headman performs this function for his chief: others that it is another man altogether. The whole matter is very secret and our information is limited. The period of seclusion varies. Mwanyile (177), who 'came out' in 1933, remained in the hut a month, and he complained most bitterly of the inconvenience of not washing for so long. During this time the young men are admonished by their fathers' senior village headmen, and told of their faults and their future duties. According to Mwandingusu (Mwenkugu's [130] senior headman who was responsible for bringing out Mwanyile), he said: 'Listen to the people: they are the real chiefs! Be hospitable! Greet people politely! Don't beat your men!' And the other senior headman, Kalinja, said: 'Do not beat your men, support them! Feed your people on milk, meat, chickens, beer! Fear your people!'

Then the great moment, from which the ritual takes its name, arrives. Very early in the morning a crowd gathers and a junior kinsman of the chief knocks on the door and shouts: 'Come out! War has come!' Each heir, followed by his senior headman, rushes out and grasps the 'spear of chieftainship' held ready at the doorway for him, while the headman grasps a medicated zebra tail. The spear has a little horn of medicines bound to it 'to show that the chief has come out', and brandishing it is 'comparable to carrying the chief aloft. We show his greatness to the people and acclaim him.' The spear of chieftainship is strength, mas-

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naturally and was buried dead, and no human was buried with him, yet they buried a live cow with him in imitation of the custom of the senior, because the junior was also a chief, and the cow was like a person. And now in European times the ruling chiefs are buried with a cow, not with a man, in imitation of the custom of the juniors; but still they are buried at night.

Kaitila denied that chiefs were buried before death, but he admitted that they were smothered.

When the chief was very ill we priests came, Nyakaleza and Ngulye, and I. We took his nails and his hair, we tore them off while he was still alive, he started up and we hid ourselves that he should not see us. Then we attended to him.

Here he made a gesture of stepping up the mantle. That is, they hastened his death as soon as the nails and hair had been stripped off.

And we dug the grave; we buried him by night, when he had died, when he had gone, with a live cow; we did this at night for it was taboo for people to see the burial of a senior chief. We killed a cow in the second grave and we ate it, we the priests, before people heard that he had died. The chief Mwalugalo (??) when his death was approaching said: 'My body is sick.' After waiting two days, the village headmen said, 'This illness has delivered us', and they tore off his nails—yes, before he died. If they had waited until after his death, would not the Ifingula, the power of chieftainship, have passed away? But they did not smother him, he just died. . . . His nails and hair were put into a little reed, which they hid beneath an omumi (Cheplasia ensiformis) tree at the village headman's, the omumi which grew at the homestead of Nyakaleza [the grandfather of the present Nyakaleza]. They buried it at a commoner's place, as if to say: 'We commoners are the earth, we have taken the power of growth (ifyaga) from the chief, those nails and the hair are the power of growth of the country (Amalo ilya mutwi fye ifyaga fye fisi).

Kaitila took Godfrey Wilson's hand and explained: 'Because, Mwalimyaja (G.W.), when you cut those nails of yours do they not grow again?' 'Yes, they grow again.' 'Well, then, where does their growth come from? Does it not come from the body?' 'Yes.' 'Well, so it is, the village headmen take the power of growth (ifyaga) from the chief, his nails and his hair.'

On another occasion Kaitila explained that formerly the relics had been kept in a pot in the house, but that when Mwalimyaja (1918) succeeded

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weather, and the ritual. 'We prayed yesterday at Ipinda, Mwaipopo and all of us, we prayed and prayed. Did you feel the cold as much as usual last night? Did you hear the banana leaves rustle as usual?' 'No.' 'Well, Kyala has heard our prayer.'

At 7.45 a.m. they moved into the grove. A black cow had already been killed. 'We killed it at cock-crow, while it was still dark, we were all there. Mwambene (the chief Mwaipopo 1:16) handed the axe to Mwanyuno (his junior kinsman *vide* p. 84) who killed the cow.' Bananas were brought and all roasted them and ate, waiting for the other priests, Njobokasa and Kinegeta. After a discussion about certain persons who had not come because the last time they got no meat, one of them said: 'Don't talk of what is forbidden in the sacred grove, don't let's make a noise; no, we pray to Mwakagile (59). . . . If we quarrel and make a noise the shades will not hear our prayer.' James (119), Kasitile's heir, was there but not Kasitile (86) himself. Someone asked whether Tandale ought to be summoned. But one said: 'We have never asked this Tandale to come here; we used to ask his father.[1] . . . Tandale lives in the boys' village. He has not the position of Ngulyo and Kinegeta.'

Mwaipopo: 'Why do you argue about this today and not before?'

After an hour's delay Njobokasa arrived, and shortly after him Kinegeta, who apologized, saying: 'I am late because my child has just died.'

Kinegeta and Ngulyo flayed the cow, letting the blood pour out on to the ground. There was some discussion over the division of the meat, and they cut out the chine, saying: 'We send it with the tail to Kasitile—if we sever the tail we have spoiled it.'

Ngulyo took the sacred meat (*igumnaga*) from both forelegs, and with Kinegeta's help he chopped off twenty-three small pieces. The rest of this meat was left for the children. At 10.10 all gathered to go to the grave. A sacred stone (*ulufga*)[2] was found under a tree. Mwaitenja (Mwaipopo's junior kinsman) cleared the undergrowth with his bill-hook and dug a hole close to the stone, then he threw the meat which Kinegeta was holding on two leaves, placed the leaves on top and filled in the earth. Five or six men spoke:

[1] Tandale the senior had buried the previous chief, Mwaipopo I (115).

[2] It was not clear whether this was the one planted at Mwaipopo's coming out or one, since his fields were some hundreds of yards away.

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I kept the chine for two nights in my house. The shades came to eat—they left practically nothing. Had I not been ill I would have asked you to come and see since you say they do not eat. . . . The shades come and see that we are celebrating the rituals.

The whole ritual was esoteric. Only the chief with eight of his agnatic kinsmen, four of his young sons (but not his grown-up heir or young grandson), and four priests participated, and we two anthropologists were permitted to look on. Peeping small boys were chased off. The shades were addressed in a conversational tone and, except during the invocation, the priests and chiefs chatted to one another, but arguments and raised voices were taboo. The boys who ate the meat were told:

See, we your fathers are sacrificing, we are making plenty of food. Follow the custom of your fathers when it is your turn to sacrifice. Learn how to do it.

The same evening Kasitile prayed at his tree again. He explained:

I would not usually pray at all tonight, it is finished. Mwaipopo and I prayed yesterday, today the ritual is finished, but that boy of mine [his heir, 119] does not visit me, he's not been to see me and he did not tell me that he was going to the ritual. . . . I am going to pray to tell my fathers not to be startled, to tell them I am not angry, to tell them to send only a little rain, not a lot, to tell them to accept the sacrifice.

He went to the same place, and chewed the root of 'blessed grass' and blew out water as before. He prayed to about thirty persons, especially to Mwamaloba (85, his elder brother) and Mwakanjoki (60, his father), and also to Mwakagile (59), Mwaijonga (82), Mwaipasi (81), Mwakabule (117), Mwamwitu (84), Mwafungo (83), Mwakipesile (118), Mwakapala (?), Lyambilo (12), Mwalubange (58), Mwamukinga (43), Mwailonjo (147?), Mwaitende (61), and Kyala (9). No mention was made of the [illegible]

You have received your child Mwakagile (116, identified with his grandfather 59), Mwaijonga (82), you have received the chief, this boy of mine (119) is quarrelling with me, do not be upset, he is a fool, a fool, but let him be . . . go and call your brothers to eat, you Mwaijonga (82), you Mwaipopo (115), and all your younger brothers; call Mwakagile (59) and Mwakanjoki (60) . . . Mwalubange (58) go to eat with your younger brother, let us find food, millet, bananas, children, milk . . . let there be a little rain only, not too much . . . people believe

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769 In this grove of Kalole three chiefs in particular gather together,
782 Mwakilolele (67 K) and his brothers Mwakalukwa (68 K) and Mwangoka (64 K) [or his son], with the younger brothers Mwakamula (66 K) and Mwakilasa (69 K) in whose country the grove is situated. The senior, Mwakilolele, initiates matters; it is he who calls his fellows saying: 'Let us pray in the grove.' Then Mwakilolele seeks a black cow and Mwangoka seeks a black bull, Mwakilasa brews beer and brings two fowls, a black and grey cock, and a black and yellow hen. So they go to the grove with their children, young boys and girls and the junior chiefs who have lost their positions as ruling chiefs—sons of Mwangomale (4 K)—and their village headmen. In the grove they pour
[778] some of the beer over the sacred stones and kill the cattle and take the liver and fat round the stomach and the meat from the upper forelegs (*jimwapa*) and cut it into small pieces and put it on two leaves, sweet banana and plantain. Then they take little pieces of meat and throw them on the ground and pluck out the feathers of the fowls. They praise the shades saying: 'Receive the fowls and beer and meat, may there be fertility of the fields that all the crops may be plentiful.' . . . 'Help us Kyala, thou Nikolambwike (?), thou Kajolali (?), you created us, together with our fathers. Help us that illness may be slight, that we may increase and be many, that all the fowls and cattle may increase and that the fields may be fertile.' When they pluck out the feathers of the hen the praises are for the wives of the chiefs who have died. Then they pick up little pieces of meat and eat them with young children; it is taboo for wives to eat it. Boys drink the beer which is in the calabash cup—they receive it in their hands—and the girls finish the beer in the large calabash. Then the men drink the rest of the beer and divide the meat. . . . The calabash cup and the large calabash and the head are left in the grove overnight . . . then the large calabash
• [784] and the cup are taken home and hung under the eaves—it is taboo to put them in the house—women must not approach them. When they have finished and come out of the grove rain pours down immediately and they rejoice saying: 'Kyala has helped us' . . . or 'the fathers have heard'.

Pouring out the beer on the ground and throwing down little pieces of [illegible] beneath receive them, may they bless the crops so that they flourish and food be plentiful. . . .' Children finish the food because they are like the shades—when the children have eaten they say the shades have eaten. They roast the meat at a distance because if they roast it close to the place of sacrifice no shades come there for the smoke drives them off. . . . The large calabash and cup and bowl which may have
[778] symbolize fertility (*ubutoni*), so that when we eat they may help us and
[784] the food may not fail. The taboo on women—wives—eating the sacrificial meat (the *jimwapa*) and drinking the beer in the calabash

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and cup is because this food is sacrificed to their fathers-in-law. Those who are not sons of Nyonde do not drink the sacrificial beer or eat the meat either, because they are of other lineages. A black cow is used in the grove because graves are always fearful and darkness falls if something improper is done. So it is said that the blackness of the cow matches the fearfulness (ubuipe) of the grove.

Besides the sacrifices at Kabale and to their more immediate ancestors, Kalewe chiefs sent offerings to the Bulipumbu, earlier occupants of the country. Mwamunda explained:

> My grandfather prayed in the grove which is across the river on mission land, in the forest; it was the grove of us Bulipumbu; we were owners of the soil, the Kalewe chiefs found us here. If ever a chief sent my grandfather and his fellows to pray there they went with an unripe ears of bananas, and sweet milk, and unripe maize, and small sweet potatoes; then they prayed and came home again and the next day, when they went to look they found the ears of bananas had ripened, the maize had hardened, the milk was thick and the sweet potatoes large; everything which was unripe had ripened. Then they said Kyala [that is Kyala and the chiefs] had stood by us. . . . We spoke of Kyala even before the Europeans had come. . . .[1]

They say that very long ago we Bulipumbu, we sons of Kanyapala, had not yet got fire, the chiefs brought it. It is this they commemorate in the 'coming out' ritual. We, the owners of the soil, were always here, the chiefs came and built, and when others came the Europeans first. They are like you Europeans who fight wars; we owners of the soil think only of hoeing.

(c) HUMAN CHOICES

It is quite clear that, though sacrifices to the heroes and at the graves of chiefs were still made while we were among the Nyakyusa (and more frequently than our friends at first admitted), the cycle was attenuated. Not only had human sacrifice certainly ceased but the chiefs were reluctant to part with cattle. . . . Kasitale (66) said one day:

> Since you [Europeans] came into the country the rituals have disappeared. Mwalipepo (c.60) never thinks of the rituals now. . . . It is cold and there is hunger; I went to Mwalipepo and told him to tell his

[1] According to the records of the first missionaries, sacrifices on Rungwe were to Mbande but the same passage refers to Mbande as a male ancestor God. It is not clear whether the two names were supplied by Kalewe informants or by the missionary himself, who was in touch with missionaries elsewhere in the district. (Journal de Frères des Ecoles, 1891.) I am indebted to the Reverend Paul Fuerer for drawing my attention to this valuable journal.

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them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Mindos, also a very wet country. Kaitila's stones were of two types, but no distinction of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the pondberd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the pondberd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed. 'When I am making rain,' said Kaitila, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kaitila was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy rain which takes away all [illegible]. But when Kyala himself was angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

People say I am angry, that the rain is because they came and beat me because of me. The time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in Mulilyando the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble. . . . Then I came up, and

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it was something done secretly, at night, and feared by everyone. Amhilikile related how, as a small boy growing up on the plain, he had been severely beaten by his mother when he called out one night, hearing a noise in the heavens, for it was made by the doctor 'sprinkling the homesteads'. The doctor heard and entered their hut angrily, and seized some of the calabashes. The medicine for sprinkling sometimes—probably always—contained human flesh, hence the anxiety of mothers not to draw the attention of the fearful doctor to their children. In Selya, after the sacrifice at Lubaga, the Kinga returned to Kanjile's homestead to sprinkle a medicine which contained the flesh of the child they had killed for the drum, and Mwamukonda (his assistant) went round by night pruning the bananas throughout Mwaipopo's country with a sacred knife, which was kept in Kanjile's homestead and Kanjile put porridge of banana flour, made from a stem of bananas provided by the child's senior wife, in the grove called Kinyungwe ('the porridge of banana flour') near his house. Then fertility was said to spread from Kanjile's throughout the country. According to Kanjile himself, the medicine contained an ingredient he did not know . . .

> My elder brother died without showing me the tree. . . . Mwamukonda does not know it either, he just got it from my father. We hope that it will appear in a dream, but it has not yet been revealed. . . . We dreamed of a cow, and of Mwaipopo (G.W.), but the medicine was not seen. I will seek another from a doctor . . . perhaps from Mbeiba.[1]

At this time also, in some—perhaps all—chiefdoms millet was taken from the sacred pot containing the 'power of growth', i.e. the hair and nails of the dead chiefs (*vide supra*, pp. 64-5) to mix with the millet seed about to be planted.

Besides this secret and dangerous 'sprinkling' [illegible] doctor, there was a much more open use of medicines for fertility by village groups, when they burnt the rubbish heaps in which they planted millet,[2] and by private individuals in their own fields.

During the hot weather a chief sometimes sends to all the villages of his chiefdom a man, curiously dressed in a cap and jerkin of banana leaves, who forbids people to cut their bananas, or even leaves of banana stems that have not

[1] A doctor known for his medicines.

[2] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 50-2.

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784 yet fruited, and tells them to eat beans, sweet potatoes, and cow
789 peas instead. The owner of a grove can cut a stem of bananas only with the permission of the man who proclaims the prohibition (*agwe lusiego*), and those who trespass pay him a fine of a hen, a knife, a pot, or their sleeping mats. The avowed purpose is that 'bananas should ripen in all the homesteads and the country appear rich and productive', but there may be further implications which we did not discover.

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he had received this object from his ancestors and it must always hang on this spot, as the ancestral spirits (*abazyuka*)[1] themselves controlled its presence. It consisted of an *unuvipera*, i. e. the tail of an ox, but the upper part of it was hollow. In this hollow part medicines (*ifingila*)[2] were kept. Yet another magical medicine, in the shape of a piece of bark of the tree called *Erythrophleum Guineense*[3] was fastened at the upper end of this sign. When my European attendant immediately said to the chief: "And from this piece you make your *muafi*"[4], the chief exclaimed in astonishment: "*Umwe wowa Kyara!*" (You are sons of Kyara! i. e. You Europeans know everything.)

After this there was no more delay in revealing to us some more features of this sign of dignity. According to the belief of his fathers this object possessed a special *amaka* (power)[5], e. g. to defeat enemies, if the chief were to hold it directly against them. Also if a thief were to try to enter the room by force, by making a hole beneath the wall of this part of the hut, he would be stricken by power coming from the *abazinya* and he would have the impression that eyes are directed against him, and so be driven away.

After these interesting communications I went to visit the hut of one of his wives, which still revealed the *ingenge*, the old-fashioned round structure of bamboo poles diverging from their upper end and thatched with grass[6].

5. The frequent walks in company with the chief or some of his *amafumu* gave me several opportunities for enquiries. On one occasion,

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[1] Cf. Wilson, Burial, p.9: *amayuka* (Sing.); Mackenzie, p.191: *banyuka* (Kaonga).

[2] Cf. Mackenzie, p.275: *ifingira* (Kaonga).

[3] The pharmacological substance of the bark (Cortex Erythrophlei, „Sassa-bark") is the alcaloid Erythrophleïn which produces the same typical effects on the heart as the Digitalis-group (cf. C. G. Santesson: Pflanzenstudien XII. Arkiv för Botanik 27 A, No. 4, Stockholm 1938, p. 6).

[4] Cf. Wilson, Land Rights, p. 82; Merensky, p. 134; Fülleborn, p. 388.

[5] *amaka* is not a specific expression for „magical" or (religious) „supernatural" power, although, from the European standpoint this meaning may be connected with the word in specific cases, but generally it means any striking expression or effect of a quality of a person or object, e. g. spirit and against *amaka*, to this word is given. This word is, therefore, a parallel to the Austronesian, especially Polynesian word *mana*, essential to my treatise „Mana. The term of that which is exceedingly striking", Staatliches Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde. I. Berlin. Ethnographica. Vol. I. Leipzig 1950. If the Nyakyusa wishes to say that a phenomenon is "supernatural", then he connects it with *Kyara*, or he names it directly "*Kiara*" (cf. Merensky, p. 110 [187, 188]).

[6] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 371, fig 140. Schematical arrange of a round-hut (to also to be found with the Nyakyusa still today).

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when we went to a field I saw a stick of a special type upright in the soil. It was made of a reed split at the top, with a small bundle of leaves squeezed in the split. A piece of bark stood out from this bundle. I asked the chief for the significance of this and he explained that it was an ulusinge, i. e. a tabu sign to prevent anyone from stepping on the field which was an imasibi (yam-field). This sign was believed to possess "magical power", to strike an invader with illness. Each owner of a field has the right to protect his field in such a manner, and a chief especially has the right to command tabus regarding plants which are staple food for the whole chieftainship, as, for instance, maize that is not allowed to be reaped before the chief has given his permission. All such tabus are also named mwiko*. During the time of such a general tabu, visitors, who by chance come through a village under tabu, are not allowed to greet the inhabitants of the village or to speak to them.

The chief added that special watchmen are installed during these periods; these men are dressed in a terrifying manner, and have the right to arrest any person transgressing the tabu. The chief may punish the offenders immediately, imposing on them, for instance, a cow as a fine. This was also the case with an ordinary theft in a field, but nowadays such affairs are regulated by the law of the Mandated Government. After the repeal of such a general tabu by the chief, beer will be drunk (e. g. ubwaluwa bwa kutapila bwa kutwedela, the beer that is poured out at the harvest), and the usual eating community of men will be re-established, for Nyakyusa men like to eat together as comrades, not in families.

10. When I was in Katumba, dances were held on several days from the afternoon till midnight, very similar in form to that which Mackenzie describes (p. 160) by the name Ikombombi.

The men stood on one side of the open place in several lines, with sticks in their hands; on the opposite side were the women and girls. Between them, more in the background, were the drummers, at the beginning of the dance; then they moved round the place. The principal drummer was a man of great excitability. He performed most extravagant movements with his body and his drumstick, making somersaults, jumping over the drum, treating it as a "living being", running to it and turning just in front of it.

* This word mwiko (forbidden) has the same wide (profane and ritual) meanings as taya or tabu in the Polynesian Languages (cf. Rud. Lehmann: Die polynesischen Tabu-Sitten. Diss. Forschungsinstitut für Völkerkunde I, 96. Leipzig 1930).